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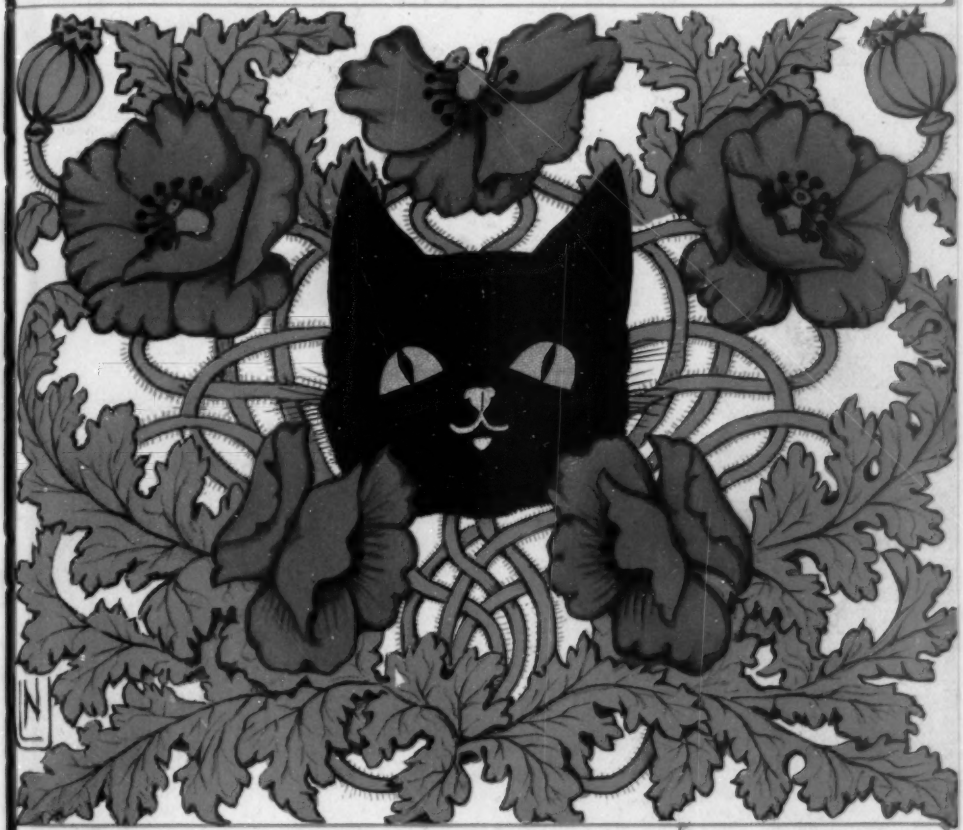

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Flicker Brown's Fourth.
Sewell Ford.
"Only a Mistake."
Clarence Maiko.
The Hold-up Near Badger's Bar.
Edmund Stuart Roche.
Little Miss Spuds.
Ward P. Winchell, U. S. N.
A Model Revolution.
W. Macpherson Wiltbank and Sewell Ford.

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A Ballad of Sapolio.

A young house-maid
Was sore afraid
That her mistress would let her go.
Tho' hard she worked,
And never shirked,
At cleaning she was s-l-o-w.

Now, all is bright,
Her heart is light,
For she's found ···· **Sapolio.**

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The Black Cat

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Flicker Brown's Fourth.

BY SEWELL FORD.

TO say that Victoria Siding, one of the minor marks of punctuation on the long line of the Canadian Pacific road, was a lonesome place would be to wofully understate the exceptional advantages it offered to hermits in search of a congenial place of residence. People came and went every day, it is true, and in considerable numbers; but the serious practical difficulties in the way of maintaining satisfactory social relations with the occupants of a flying express train, left its solitary resident, the station master, substantially without society of any kind, and in an isolation so complete as to materially assist his natural politeness in overlooking the dubious motives and personal undesirability of his infrequent Indian visitors, and to give the monthly call of the paymaster's car the incidental importance of a social function.

Into such an environment Fate, with its customary strong sense of humor, had pitchforked Flicker Brown, a native of New England, with an ample inheritance of all the characteristics of his birthplace, including an intense patriotism and an unquenchable loquacity. Flicker had, in a happier past, been justly described as a man who would rather talk than eat, and the irony of circumstances which had, during the three months of his official residence

at Victoria Siding, strictly confined the effective use of his mouth to the latter employment was, indeed, bitter.

To explain just how it happened that so loyal an American should be holding a position of some trust, if of small emolument, on the greatest railroad line in Her Majesty's American provinces would require too profound a dip into the variegated past of Flicker Brown. It is enough to say that at twenty-six the responsibilities of life still sat lightly upon him, so lightly, indeed, that, lacking other ballast, he came and went to any port at will, sometimes with clearance papers and sometimes without. And his latest voyage upon the troubled sea of life had left him in this incongruous haven. But the most iron circumstances were powerless to confine Flicker Brown's natural tendencies. Nothing could curb his desire to talk, not even the lack of hearers. Because he chanced to be a dozen miles from the nearest human being, it did not occur to Flicker that conversation was vain. He loved the sound of the human voice, and even under more favorable circumstances had been suspected of preferring the sound of his own vocal organ to that of conversational competitors. So it was merely characteristic that, standing upon his official platform one hot July morning, his legs wide apart, and his hands in his trousers' pockets, he should have smitten the unheeding air of British Columbia with the following entirely superfluous utterance: —

"Now, what in tillieludlum do you suppose is in that box?"

"Tillieludlum" being an ingenious compromise between the profane traditions of his profession and the samples of a strict bringing up.

The subject of his inquiry was a long, rectangular, shallow box of new quarter-inch pine. It might have held scythe blades, or clothes pins, or pressed corned beef in cans. Certainly there was nothing strikingly mysterious about it. It was an ordinary, commonplace, every-day sort of a box, yet for Flicker it had a certain mysterious fascination which easily prevailed over the not particularly distracting cares of his office. It was not very heavy, for he had easily perched it on top of the barrel of salt that had come for Pierre Miquelle. Both had been dumped on the platform before he had left his bunk in the corner that very morning,

contributions of the way-freight which always came wheezing along just in time to wake him up to the enjoyment of a second nap. Weighted by a ballast rock on top of the box had been the way-bill. But the way-bill showed only one package of freight for Victoria Siding, and that one was the salmon canner's barrel of salt. Yet here were two.

At first this had not puzzled Flicker, for the sleepy freight conductor had made mistakes before; but on looking over the box he found neither name nor address upon it. After closer search, however, he had discovered a single tack holding a bit of paper and showing where had been the tag which rough handling had rubbed off.

"Some shippers haven't the brains of a jack rabbit," said Flicker, again indulging his ruling passion for conversation.

He carried the box into the station where he could look at it while getting breakfast, leaving the task of rolling in the heavy barrel until later.

"Now what *do* you suppose is in that box?"

This was not the third or the fourth time he had allowed himself the luxury of putting this question. Not that it was any part of his business to find out what *was* in the box. On the contrary, as freight agent, his plain duty was to mark it "S. S." for "strayed shipment," and send it back to the general office. But Flicker reflected that if, as freight agent, he ought not to pry into strayed parcels, as station master he had a right to know the kind of merchandise he was storing. Besides, as switch tender and telegraph operator, he might be pardoned a little interest. And above and beyond this concerted call of duty, he was conscious of a very human curiosity to lift the lid of the estray.

He did not immediately yield to this weakness, however. During the three months in which he had served the Canadian Pacific at Victoria Siding he had learned to do things leisurely, there was always so little to do and such a wealth of time in which to do it. And he was, besides, reluctant to reduce at once to a possible commonplace the very first stimulating mystery that had arisen during his incumbency. Above all there was duty.

So the conscientious freight agent sternly drove back home the few nails which mere irresponsible curiosity and official casuistry

had idly withdrawn, and sternly applied himself to the task of housing his other piece of freight.

But the box continued to exert over him an irresistible attraction. He became aware that his customarily simple pilgrimages about his diminutive premises were complicated by superfluous detours, all leading him by and near the box. And at each perigee, so to speak, resulting from this mysterious force of gravitation, he felt his sense of official honor to grow weaker and the promptings of his weak humanity to wax more and more irresistible. It is due to him to say that it was high noon before he finally yielded, but it must be owned that at twelve precisely he nervously seized his hatchet and guiltily began to loosen the lid.

Once at the business he quite forgot his scruples. Up came one corner, then the other. Next he pried up the sides and carefully yanked out the wire nails. Under the cover was a layer of excelsior,— a momentary but irritating delay. Lifting this, he paused and gave utterance to a long whistle.

"Wh-e-e-ew! Flags, by ginger! The good old Stars and Stripes, too. Great switches! It seems like years since I've seen one. 'Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that made us free!'" and the impetuous Flicker, waving one in each hand, marched about the room. They were cheap, printed flags, about ten and a half by fifteen inches in size, but there were three bundles of them, a dozen in a bunch, and each flag mounted on a five-foot stick. In a moment he was excitedly pawing out more excelsior.

"Jumpin' beeswax! Fireworks, or I'm a Piute! Rockets, pinwheels, Roman candles, cannon crackers, punk, and the whole outfit."

It would be neither edifying nor moral to trace the process by which Flicker Brown convinced himself that in appropriating this strayed package he was doing a patriotic and commendable deed. The process was brief. Mainly, it was the bracing up of the wobbly sophistry that the man who paid for these fireworks intended them to be burned on that very Fourth of July; that the loss of the tag would prevent him from ever attending to the business himself; and that the ultimate fate of the said fireworks, subsequent to their sale at auction with other unclaimed parcels, would be to go up, not in honor of our own glorious declaration

of independence, but to commemorate the birthday of a successor to the throne of the hated George Third.

"No sir-ree. No Canucker'll ever set these off on no Queen's birthday, not if I can help it," declared Flicker indignantly. And he continued, "Will Victoria Siding celebrate to-night? Well, I guess."

For an hour he was busy and happy. He tacked a row of flags to the eaves of the square, one-story stone station, crossed a pair in each window and nailed two more over the door. He set up rocket troughs and fastened to a telegraph pole a crossbar for Catherine wheels.

Then on his kindled enthusiasm came a dampening thought. What satisfaction would there be in having a display of fireworks and no one there to see it but himself? Way back on the creek bank there were some Siwash huts, but the Indians were probably off down river fishing. Save for them he knew of not another living soul nearer than the next station, a dozen miles west, where there were not more than half a hundred, counting half breeds. Never before had the human barrenness of British Columbia made itself felt so strongly.

In his glance there was sadness — or as near sadness as the patriotic and conversational Flicker ever got — as he looked at his preparations. There would be no spectators at Victoria Siding's Fourth of July celebration.

"Won't, eh? By Christopher, we'll see about that!"

It was then that Flicker had his inspiration.

When darkness began to shut in around the lonely little station, when the great spruce forest seemed to advance until it hemmed him in closer than ever, he stood in the doorway and whistled "Yankee Doodle," beating out a bass accompaniment on the door panels with his heels.

Far off in the blackness where the darkening sky met the dark woods in an irregular line began to glow a single bright eye. As it grew in size the low rumble took on a heavier volume; then the eye became a great blazing headlight and the rumble swelled to the crashing thunder of flying wheels heavy laden. The Dominion Limited was coming west.

There came two frightened snorts from the engine whistle, a series of screeches as the brake shoes bit the steel, and a con-

fused whirring that told of reversed drivers and an open sand-box. Then the long train, with a bumping of draw-heads, came to a stop at Victoria Siding.

Every one aboard seemed to be interested in this sudden change from the noisy, swinging rush coastwards to the calm, dense stillness of this desolate spot. Through the windows of the long, vestibuled cars the passengers peered out. Late diners left their coffee, tired travelers pushed back their berth curtains, and the men in the smoking compartment dropped cards and stories.

They saw Flicker Brown calmly swinging a red lantern. The brass-buttoned conductor saw him, too, and lost no time in seeking him out.

"What in thunder do you mean by stopping the Limited at this forsaken hole, and that with us twenty minutes behind schedule?" he demanded, red of face and puffing from his dash up the track.

"Orders," replied Flicker with unusual brevity, and handed out a message damp from the copy press.

The conductor grabbed the sheet and held it close to his nickeled lantern.

"'Hold Victoria Siding until 8:32,'" he read. "Now what idiot sends me such an order as this? Why, there's no train due either way for four hours."

"Them's the orders," said Flicker. "Mebbe it's a special."

"They wouldn't sidetrack the Limited for a special. Joe, what do you think of this?" said the conductor as the engineer came up.

Joe's expressed thoughts on the subject were rather profane. He joined the conductor in pointed criticism of train despatchers as a genus and of this one as an individual. Having done this and somewhat relieved his mental strain, the conductor said to Joe: "Well, I suppose we shall have to take the siding."

And take the siding they did.

While something like three hundred passengers were simultaneously investigating this delay, Flicker got some matches and created a diversion. Touching off a red light at either end of the platform, he revealed the novel spectacle of a Canadian Pacific railroad station decked out in American colors. He was sending up his second rocket when the conductor rushed back.

"You — you impudent scoundrel! What do you mean by — by that?" and, words failing, he waved his hand toward the station.

"Me?" said Flicker. "Oh, I don't mean nothing by that; I'm just havin' a little celebration."

"Celebration! For what?"

"Why, for the Fourth of July. I always do."

"You do, do you? Well, young man, you're cheeky. Don't you know that as an employee of this road you have no right to do such a thing? Stop it at once! Why, I've got Lord Windover-Breers and two Privy Councillors aboard. They'll be red hot. Stop it, I say."

"Guess not, old man; this is my private blow-out, and she's goin' through, lords or no lords. You can tell His Royal Thingumbobness that for me. Look out, I'm going to touch off another!" and as Flicker applied the slow-match there was a swish and a roar as the rocket raced up into the sky to burst into balls of red, white, and blue.

The conductor retreated into the station, and the little knot of passengers which had surrounded them was quickly augmented by enthusiastic recruits from the train, who practically testified to their appreciation of the humor of the situation by hilariously assisting Flicker in the task of setting off his fireworks. They were deep in the fun when the angry conductor burst forth from the station and rushed toward the victim of misplaced patriotism.

"Hi, you agent! What d'ye mean? Headquarters say they didn't send out any such order."

"Who said they did?" and Flicker touched the burning punk to the fuse of a big Roman candle. "Them's my orders. Yes, *my* orders; that's what I said. Hey, keep off there, you beef-eating Britisher, or I'll plug you full of hot balls."

"I'll have you discharged to-morrow," roared the irate official, displaying, however, a physical discretion in the face of Flicker's awkward weapon that ludicrously contrasted with his fire-eating mood.

"You can't," said Flicker, as he triumphantly blazed away. "I'm going to resign to-night."

And as the train ignominiously retreated from an unmistakable

American victory, a ringing cheer went up from a knot of Yankee passengers on its rear platform, in commemoration of the first and last Fourth of July celebration at Victoria Siding.

Flicker's resignation was wired that evening to the superintendent in the following laconic terms: —

"I'm through here and gone West. Send on another man."

All of which came duly to pass. The new man, it is needless to say, is a lonely but loyal Briton.

"Only a Mistake."

BY CLARENCE MAIKO.

ANY student of Mental Philosophy will tell you that every impression received by our brain cells at any time and under all circumstances, no matter whether we be sober or drunk, on the field of battle or in the region of abstract thought, is recorded on the tablets of memory, and is never lost. Moreover, it is a singular fact that the proper degree of molecular vibration being excited in the brain, no matter by what cause, — and the possible causes are without number, — these thoughts spring into active and conscious reexistence, for they have never been destroyed. Here lies the key to some interesting phenomena.

Have you ever on making a call thought you had hung your hat up on the hall rack, and when leaving sought there vainly for the very hat which perhaps you were holding in your hand? If you have, you know how unpleasantly this little trick of your brain jarred your reason, in spite of your involuntary apology that "it was only a mistake, a trifling, absent-minded mistake, after all."

It was all because of just such a little mistake, on the part of Mrs. Starr, that foolish persons who postulate, "Marriage is a failure," used to point triumphantly at Starr and his wife. All on account of a queer little brain trick, Mrs. Starr blighted her husband's life and her own.

Still, when they harnessed up together for better or for worse, no couple could be more devotedly in love with one another than were they.

This forms a rather sad but, I think, profitable little story.

Now that the principals concerned are dead and gone, the physician who attended Mrs. Starr says I am at liberty to tell the tale. He laughs, as he is entitled to, at the construction I put

upon the facts, — but inconsistently evades sitting in judgment on the case.

Men remember Mrs. Starr as the beautiful Miss Snell, for her face in those days was a face that no man could quite forget. She was the most utterly ruthless coquette of her day. The family means, in her generation, had fallen far below what was necessary to keep up the prestige of the family name.

Her papa and her mamma never ceased to lament that fact, and Miss Snell was dutifully impressed in her early girlhood that her beauty must win back the departed family glories by social achievements. How well it did everybody knows.

By a mere coincidence, among the persons chained by her smiles was a Boy who did not have much of anything but a naval commission, some brass buttons, and a sword.

This business with the Boy was quite unnecessary. Miss Snell had nothing to gain by winning the Boy's love; still, she even went out of her way to do it. The Boy avoided her because he knew she was unobtainable for him, and because the first time he looked into her eyes he knew, with but half a chance, he would love her very badly. Miss Snell knew it, too, but if the Boy had not avoided her, she would not have done what she did.

She was engaged to another man at the time — it was her third, — and she deliberately broke that engagement that she might be free to deal with the Boy. This was most effectually accomplished.

He was a queer mixture of poet and sailor, the Boy was, and Miss Snell was a little shocked at the tempest she invoked within him. There was something in his glorious avowal of love that made former protestations pale into insignificance. It carried her away for the moment, and she gave him her lips and she gave him her promise, knowing very well in her heart of hearts it was the old story of love on one side and submission on the other. But marriage on his pay was impossible, so the Boy went off to his ship, and Miss Snell back to her triumphs in the social whirl of the city.

The letters that came to her from every port the Boy's ship made were rather remarkable. They were of a new breed and species. The writer seemed to have an uncanny divination of

everything the woman he loved did or thought. In spite of that, and most pitiful of all, an immeasurable love breathed forth from every line. No man should write the things he wrote to any living woman. At last a letter came from Honolulu that was so touching in its pathos, so abject in its devotion, and still so marvelously prophetic in its conception of Miss Snell's life, that she felt called upon to write him some truths. This was just about the time she met Starr, and fell a victim herself to the passion she had trifled with so often.

When the Boy received her letter he went down to his quarters in the wardroom, and blew his brains all over the nice white paint that covered the cruiser's armored walls. Out of decency's sake the surgeon called it a pistol-cleaning accident, but he was brutal enough to send back a blood-splashed letter that he found all twisted up in the Boy's hand, to the woman who wrote it far away at home.

The night before the Starr-Snell nuptials Miss Snell did what all other girls would have done, religiously burned all those fantastic, extravagant letters the Boy had written her. It was rather peculiar that she found the red-stained letter which had been the Boy's death-warrant and his last letter to her from Honolulu lying together in her bureau drawer, apart from all the others, heaped carelessly in a compartment of her escritoire. She did not remember putting them away among her laces and her bonbonnières, but there they were, so she took them over to the fire a little gingerly and tossed them after their fellows into the dancing flames.

Then she sat down and watched them curl and crinkle in the eager, lapping flame, till the draught caught the feathery black ashes and carried them up the sooty chimney flue. Speculation on Miss Snell's thoughts at this time is, I think, entirely problematical.

Popular fancy has it that just before death and just before marriage one's thoughts grow rapt — abstracted, and the faces of old loves and the faces of old friends come to look in on one as they knew one in bygone days. So it is reasonable to suppose that as Miss Snell languidly reposed in the glow of her bedroom hearth, among the faces that chased one another across her mental vision

was the haggard, appealing face of the Boy; this, however, is not given us to know.

The wedding on the following noon was an event of social importance and it came off with great *éclat*. But the crowds, and the music, and the flowers, and even the six charming Watteau shepherdesses with ribboned crooks, who were the bridesmaids, do not concern us here. In fact, my friend, Mrs. Starr's physician, tells me that all I have written so far is rather incidental and almost superfluous. He quite refuses to acknowledge the connection between the past events of Mrs. Starr's life and what happened later. Our premises are so radically divergent that with him it could not be otherwise. But let it be plain there is no question at all about what is to follow.

Hardly had the couple returned from their wedding journey, when Starr called on the doctor and told him "he was worried about the health of his wife. Mrs. Starr," he said, "was in an unaccountably nervous and hysterical condition, and was growing more wan and hollow-eyed as each day went by." The man of medicine went and looked at her, found that this was true, prescribed the usual remedies and continued to visit her occasionally; but he did not learn the cause of her trouble till some time had expired; and, when he did learn, it was from Mrs. Starr's own lips that part of it came, Starr himself not only corroborating in general all she said, but adding a great deal more.

The first evening of their honeymoon, when unpacking her things, Mrs. Starr was rather unnerved to find, all covered up among the dainty feminine belongings in the tray of her trunk, the two identical love letters that she had watched burn to a crisp and fly up the black chimney flue. Unexplainable as their presence was, she could only put it down to a mistaken impression on her part, and she made certain to destroy them this time beyond question or doubt. Into a gas jet she hastily thrust them, and a second time she watched the flame creep over the unwelcome letters, turning them into two charred black curls which fell in broken flakes on the floor, and there were ground into impalpable dust by two angry little heels. That this was not witnessed by her husband is almost unnecessary to add.

When Mrs. Starr found the very same letters in the very same

place a day or so after, a thrill of alarm chilled her through and through. With sickening dread she tore them into a hundred fragments, and threw them fearfully out of her window, into the hurly-burly of a winter storm.

Although she became positively ill from her scare at the supernatural reappearance of the letters, she did not tell her husband about the matter, but, womanlike, tried to pray herself into belief that it was only a mistake, after all,— a mere common, ordinary, every-day mistake. And this was wrong.

In a short time the couple returned to the city, and Mrs. Starr's condition so alarmed her husband that he called on her physician. She kept the cause of her trouble entirely secret, but how often she found and destroyed those two mysterious letters during this time is not known. Physically she rapidly grew worse, though her husband showered on her a wealth of loving care and attention. Her peace of mind and her happiness were fast becoming utterly destroyed.

One night Starr awoke, and in the half light he saw the white-robed figure of his wife on her knees before the open drawer of her bureau. She seemed to be holding something in her hands, which she was regarding with a look of terror.

"What is wrong, sweetheart? Does anything trouble you?" asked Starr soothingly.

At the sound of her husband's voice the woman carried her hands to her face and rose. Then she tottered over towards him repeating mechanically in a low whisper of despair: —

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God!"

When she reached her couch she sank back on the pillows, choking with dry, tearless sobs.

Starr rose and turned on the light, and looked to see what had alarmed his wife; in vain, for there was nothing there. All that a loving man could do to compose and quiet her he did.

In the lull that followed she told him something — not all — of the strange reincarnations of those letters, just enough to startle him and arouse his curiosity immensely; but he was wise enough at the time not to ask to see them or ask anything else about them. Nevertheless he determined to watch very carefully their next manifestation and use caustic remedies for their disposal.

Mrs. Starr had found that attempts to destroy those letters were utterly useless, for they always came back, and, besides, hating and loathing them as she did, they began to exert over her mind a marvelous fascination. Though she quivered when she saw the muddy red blots on her letter, she craved to look into it, and she was no more content with a mere glance at its Honolulu post-mark and at the neat blue letter-head of the other. So she commenced to read them — lingeringly, feeling all the while that with every word she read she was driving another nail into the coffin of her happiness.

This harrowing desire to contemplate those letters came to her most often at night, and then she would rise from her husband's side, steal over to her bureau drawer, and mumble away in the dim yellow light the things the Boy wrote to her before she killed him.

Of course her husband saw her doing this one night, and he went over to her with loving words and caresses, which, strange to say, she recoiled from as if they had been blows.

Perhaps that was why Starr foolishly asked her why she was "standing there muttering those nonsensical things." In answer she held her hands up in front of his face, — just exactly as you would hold a letter for a person to read, and Starr saw there was absolutely nothing in her hands; but he did not say so to her. He asked her quietly to read the letter to him, and thereby wrought his own and her undoing.

Mrs. Starr read the letters to him — both of them, from date to superscription, — in a low, metallic monotone, — for all the world as if the real writing were in her hands.

The letter from the Boy came first, and before two lines were read Starr knew — what only a few people did know — that his wife had given her pledge and her kisses to the Boy long before she gave them to himself.

The Boy said he "went down on his knees in his cabin at night and prayed to his God to do to him the worst if that would only make the happiness of the woman he loved!" Oh, that was not all he said. He wrote things that it is better not to mention or to print. And he told of long, clinging kisses given and taken, "kisses that had taught him why it is the world is sometimes bartered for a woman's kiss."

It was too, too much for poor Starr, — too much for any husband to hear from any wife's lips; and because it was only a phantom, a memory, that could not be explained away, it seemed ever so much the worse.

When Mrs. Starr finished reading her reply to the Boy's letter her husband had collapsed, and was only semi-conscious. Then she bent down and electrified him by pointing with her finger to certain round brown splashes, unseen by him, which she whispered were "Blood! Blood!"

Starr gave a great cry and rushed out of the bedroom. A half an hour later, white and shaking, he told the doctor his wife was crazy, and added rather brokenly that he felt he "could never bear to see her again."

Up to the very last Mrs. Starr continued to find those letters every day. She found them hidden under dainty, fragrant lingerie in her bureau drawer, under her pillow at night, and sometimes even in the very bosom of the dress she wore. In agony she was doomed to read them over and over again, till she could read no more.

There are people who do not know why Starr and his wife drifted away from one another, and who are inclined to call Starr a brute.

My own opinion is that Providence stepped into the lives of Starr and his wife and commenced business a little sooner than is His usual custom.

But the saddest part of it all is this: for Starr's sake the woman would have gone on her hands and knees through all the world, — so much I know.

The Hold-up Near Badger's Bar.

BY EDMUND STUART ROCHE.

THE saloon of Mulcahy's Hotel was the general rendezvous of Big Bear when its citizens were at leisure, and it was there that Brisbane passed his last evening at the camp. He had come up to Big Bear in the interest of a non-resident client, to take formal possession of a small hydraulic property recently purchased, and to make definite arrangements as to the details of its future operation. This being satisfactorily accomplished, he had planned to return with all haste to civilization, and early in the evening made a movement to leave the room in order to complete preparations for an early start. As he approached the door, however, he was stopped by a gesture and word of invitation from Mulcahy to enter the little office, railed off at one corner of the room, and barely furnished with a desk and two wooden chairs.

"I'm askin' a favor," began Mulcahy. "There'll be no pack goin' out for three days yet, and I have to get some dust, which the boys have just brought up from my chum down the river, into the bank by Thursday, sure. Now, you'll be in before that, and would you mind just takin' it over the trail for me? It's not weighty and'll not be in your way."

Appreciative of much recent hospitable treatment at Mulcahy's hands, Brisbane readily undertook what at first thought seemed but a trifling commission. As they spoke, Mulcahy was already unlocking one of the little cupboards of the desk, and taking from it a small buckskin sack of gold dust, he handed it to Brisbane.

"It's as heavy for its size as a bad conscience!" said the latter, laughing.

"Only a trifle risin' ten pounds," responded Mulcahy, with a depreciatory wave of the hand, and giving his guest a memorandum for his guidance. Brisbane was not usually a critically cau-

tious or suspicious man, and yet no sooner had he received the little sack than he felt an exaggerated sense of responsibility. He even glanced uneasily here and there, as he crossed the crowded room, to see whether his transaction with Mulcahy had been observed.

The faces which he saw were, however, all familiar, and expressed not the slightest concern in him or his movements. Thus reassured, he would at once have dismissed all further anxiety from his mind, had he not for the first time noticed, as he turned toward the door, with a good-night word to Mulcahy, a stranger, seated apart from the rest in an armchair tilted back against the wall. The man seemed to be carefully observing him, and, as he met Brisbane's glance, at once turned his eyes away, and moved awkwardly in his chair. He was tall and thin, past middle life, with a clean-shaven face, sharply cut features, and small, alert black eyes. His long, straight hair was tinged with gray, and was brushed back from a high and narrow forehead. He was evidently a recent arrival, for his saddle-bags lay beside him on the floor. At sight of him and his suddenly averted eyes, Brisbane felt all his suspicions and uneasiness revive. Had he followed his first impulse he would have made inquiries about the stranger, of Mulcahy, but a sense of the absurdity of his misgivings checked him, and half laughing at himself, he went directly to his room. Here his newly assumed responsibility still weighed upon him, and after an interval of restless sleep, which came to him only after hours of wakefulness, he awoke with a start, worn and unrefreshed, with the first cold gray light of dawn.

Once he was on the trail, however, breathing the fresh, pine-scented morning air, his megrims left him for a time. The way was new to him, as he had reached Big Bear by riding up the river from the coast, and wishing to see what he could of the country, he had determined to still follow the trail inland until he reached the Fort Jones road.

Later in the day, when the sky grew overcast and the shadows of the pines and balsams deepened, while the rising evening wind in the tree tops mingled its sighs with the myriad complaining voices of the river far below, a nervous sense of loneliness oppressed him. Consequently it was with a feeling of relief that

at last he espied the little cluster of shabby buildings which formed the settlement of Badger's Bar, — a once prosperous mining town that now existed only as a convenient stopping place for the scant travel that passed up and down the river. As Brisbane rode up to the corral adjoining the two-storied, weather-worn structure which the sign "El Dorado House," in faded yellow letters, informed him was the "hotel," there was absolutely no living thing in sight except a ground-squirrel that scolded and chattered at him from the opening of its hole, under one of the rotting foundation beams, and a solitary hen pecking vigorously at sluggish flies on the threshold of the open doorway. Old cans, bones, and empty bottles were scattered about everywhere, and the whole aspect of the place was squalid and depressing.

Brisbane had, however, no choice in the selection of his quarters for the night, and, dismounting, walked to the door and knocked loudly. The fly-catching hen flew by him with shrill, irritating cackles, and then a thick silence settled again oppressively over the place. Once more he knocked, louder than before, and shouted, "Halloo, there!" into the cheerless room. A moment later he heard a chair move in the room beyond, an inner door was opened, and a blear-eyed, bent, old man approached him slowly. His dress was slovenly. A ragged straw hat, through the torn crown of which coarse wisps of iron-gray hair protruded, surmounted a coarse, besotted face bearing a fortnight's beard. Altogether he was a most unpromising and repellant-looking host. He barely replied to Brisbane's salutation, and sullenly leading the way to the row of open sheds in the corral, pointed out the hay and an almost empty grain bin, and then stood idly by, watching his guest at work. The sun was setting as Brisbane, following his host, returned to the house. One of two compartments, unlighted by any window and roughly boarded off from the large room was assigned to him as quarters for the night. This and the companion den bore the numbers "38" and "39" respectively, painted in unevenly lined figures on each door.

"Supper in a half hour!" growled his host, after lighting the candle on the table in the corner, as he closed the door.

Hardly had the old man gone, when Brisbane heard the sound of horses' hoofs before the house, a knocking, a loud call, and

again the slow step of his host, as he shuffled toward the outer door; and knew that some traveler had arrived. Tired from his day's journey, he stretched himself upon the bed to rest, and in a moment was in a doze, from which he was only awakened by a rap on his door, and a gruff announcement of "Supper!"

In the large room, at one end of a long table, dimly lighted, two plates were laid, and a thin, middle-aged, untidy woman who was pouring tea as he entered, motioned him to the vacant place. He took his seat, and glanced at the guest who was his *vis-a-vis* — doubtless the late arrival — when, to his amazement, he recognized the elderly stranger who had aroused his suspicions at Mulcahy's the night before. Brisbane bade him good evening, at the same time instinctively placing his hand on the little sack of gold dust in his coat pocket. With a short reply the man dropped his eyes to his plate, evidently wishing to be left to himself, and as Brisbane was of the same mind, the meal progressed in silence. When at last the stranger finished, he did not linger, but rose and passed directly towards the front room, in which a lamp had just been lighted, and which, judging from its furniture, — a desk, a rusty box-stove, a long settle, and a few wooden armchairs, much cut with initials and other devices by previous travelers, was evidently the office and lounging room of the hotel. As he crossed through the doorway, his watch chain caught upon the latch bar, and was broken by the wrench which followed, so that a locket charm attached to it fell upon the floor. With an impatient exclamation he stooped to recover it, and then passed on, leaving Brisbane to finish his supper alone.

When Brisbane finally sought the office it was unoccupied, but from the sounds issuing from the room adjoining his own, it was evident that "38" had been assigned to the stranger. With a vague idea of keeping awake as long as possible, he smoked a pipe, went to the corral to see how his horse was getting on, tried his eyes in reading, by the dim light of the smoky hanging lamp, of a "Daring Hold-up" in an old county paper found upon the desk, and having thus exhausted the evening resources of Badger's Bar, sought the stuffy hospitalities of "39" and went to bed. The unwonted nervousness which had come with the receipt of the buckskin sack had grown upon him. He was, if possible, more

uneasily anxious concerning it than he had been the night before, and changed it repeatedly from one place of concealment to another, and then was not content. When at last he extinguished his candle, the lamp in the office threw a feeble light through the open transom, and he lay for a long time watching a spider on the ceiling crossing and recrossing the dim track thus made, at intervals emerging from and disappearing into the blackness on either side. All sounds of movement had long since ceased in the stranger's room, and at length Brisbane fell asleep.

Sounds of a closing door and of retreating feet, and the penetrating fatty smell of an unsnuffed candle, half awakened him, but suggested nothing definite to his drowsy consciousness. Again he was disturbed by a clatter among the old tins strewn upon the road outside, as they were struck by the hoofs of a horse moving rapidly away. The hanging lamp in the "office" had gone out, or been extinguished, and the darkness was intense. He groped for a match, and lit his candle. His first waking thought was of the little sack of gold dust, and he hurriedly felt for it in the saddle-bags slung over the chair by his bedside. To his amazement and dismay, the sack was gone! For a moment a magnified sense of his loss overwhelmed him. How could he explain its disappearance, with any hope of being believed? How could he make good the loss? Cursing the easy good nature which had thus involved him, his suspicions turned instinctively to the stranger in the adjoining room. Hastily half dressing, he hastened to the door of "38," listened for a moment, and hearing no sound within, knocked sharply at the door. Receiving no response, he hurriedly entered. The room was empty! His neighbor had decamped! He ran through the open door of the "office," and on to the corral, where, by the dull, early morning light, he saw at a glance that the stranger's horse was gone. As he turned toward the house, his host was at the bars. "Leavin'?" briefly inquired the latter.

"Where is the man who came last night?" asked Brisbane anxiously, ignoring the old man's question.

"Had breakfast and's went."

"How long has he been gone?"

"Ten minutes, maybe."

Brisbane waited for no more, but, paying his bill, he saddled his horse with nervous haste, hurried to "39" for his revolver, mounted, and was away, following the fresh tracks of the stranger's horse. The little stretch of road before the house presently dwindled to a narrow but well-worn trail, leading up a flat, sandy cañon. Brisbane rode as for his life.

"I must get back the sack!" was the one thought in his mind, and the hoof beats of his horse and the creak of his cadenced stirrup leathers seemed to give rhythmic repetition to the words. The way was heavy with sand, and wound sharply about among the scrub-oak and *manzanita*, so that he had in some degree to slacken the gait at which he had set out; but despite his ten minutes' start, the man ahead would need more than a good horse, freely ridden, to escape even now. The next moment, as Brisbane rounded a little wooded point, he drew a breath of relief. There, not forty yards before him on the trail, was the elderly stranger, riding at an easy lope, evidently unconscious of pursuit. His head was bent to the chilly morning wind which swept down the cañon, and the long ends of the worsted muffler tied about his throat streamed out like clumsy pennants behind him. His saddle-bags flapped awkwardly as he rode, and his pursuer's eyes, jealously fixed upon them as the probable repository of the stolen sack, brightened as he seemed to detect a particular heaviness in the right-hand bag.

"It is there!" thought Brisbane, and at the same instant, still urging on his horse, he shouted, "Halt! Hold up your hands!" and emphasized his demand by firing in the air. The stranger turned quickly at sound of the shot, and seeing himself covered by Brisbane's revolver, reined in, and at the second harsh command, "Hold up your hands, you thieving scoundrel!" turned gray with fright, and hastily complied. Brisbane was by his side in a moment.

"Turn over that dust!" he demanded. "Where is it?"

The stranger said nothing, but nodded his head toward the heavier of the two bags. He was trembling from head to foot, as Brisbane, with eyes never leaving him for an instant, fumbled at the strap of the saddle-bag, and, this unfastened, felt for the sack of gold dust. Yes, his eyes had served him well. The bag was there; and in another moment he had dropped it into the pocket

of his coat with a sense of inexpressible relief, as he felt its weight drag heavily upon him.

"Now go!" said Brisbane, "and don't turn 'round, or I'll shoot!"

The stranger needed no second suggestion, but put spurs to his horse and was off like the wind. Altogether it had turned out a much tamer affair than Brisbane had anticipated. Still, he felt rather proud of his achievement, and his thoughts were altogether self-complacent as he rode slowly back to Badger's Bar. Day was just breaking as he led his horse into the corral, and fed and watered him. The smoke from the kitchen chimney, and the rattling of dishes, assured him that his breakfast was in course of preparation, and he reentered his room to complete his somewhat fragmentary toilet, and make ready for his journey. Throwing aside a pillow from the bed to get his watch, which he had placed under it the night before, he stood for a moment dazed and motionless, almost doubting his senses, fairly stupefied by what he saw. There, on the mattress, close beside his watch, lay a little buckskin sack, seemingly the double of the one he had just rescued from the stranger. Was it witchcraft? Was he dreaming, or were there, in fact, two separate and distinct little buckskin sacks in his possession?

Aghast at the preposterous but only possible explanation of it all which suddenly flashed upon him, he sank back in a chair, overcome by mingled consternation and amusement.

Now he vaguely remembered that just before he had dropped to sleep he had, as a climax to his attempt at concealment, taken the sack from his saddle-bags and hidden it in its present resting place, and in his startled, hurried search in the morning, with the mists of sleep still clouding his memory, he had quite forgotten the change and gone off on a false scent. He had simply held up the elderly stranger!

Brisbane wiped the perspiration from his forehead, groaning audibly. What should he do? How could he extricate himself from his present embarrassing, even dangerous position? It was too late now to think of overtaking the stranger and returning his property. Even were it possible to do so, he could hardly hope that his explanation would be seriously received. He would

simply be turned over to an officer. He could not stay where he was and run the risk of arrest in this out-of-the-way place where there were no friends to vouch for him. At that very moment there might be a sheriff's *posse* after him. He dared not confide in his sinister-looking host, and much less did he dare to entrust to him the gold dust. Two things only seemed plain: he must get away from Badger's as quickly as he could, and take his accumulated treasure with him; then, of course, he must look up the stranger later on, restore his property, and apologize. While these thoughts passed through his mind, Brisbane packed his saddle-bags, and then, hurrying through his breakfast, settled for the meal, threw himself on his horse, and clattered away.

About two miles out from Badger's the trail forked, one fork leading — as he had learned from his host — towards Yreka, whence the stage ran by Mount Shasta to what was then the railroad terminus at Redding, and the other towards Fort Jones, from which place another stage line ran by Trinity to the same goal. At this division of the trail Brisbane halted only a moment to consider his choice of route. The stranger had taken the trail toward Fort Jones, as fresh horse tracks plainly showed. He must take the other, and by hard riding he might yet be in season for that morning's coach.

As he urged his horse up cañons and along seemingly innumerable ridges, it seemed to him that he heard an approaching *posse* in each stone that rolled down the mountain side, and in his own heartbeats the sounds of hot pursuit. Gradually the trail descended to a broad valley; it entered a well-traveled road, and presently, not three miles away, he saw the thick cluster of brick and wooden buildings which marked his immediate destination. As he rode up toward the little brick hotel, his horse panting and in a foam of sweat, he saw that he was only just in time for the coach. Indeed, the driver was just gathering up his reins and slackening his brake to start. Brisbane tried to call out, but was so choked with dust, and worn out with the hurry of his flight, that he could only wave his hand frantically at the driver.

"Hold on, Hank! Here's another passenger, I reckon," shouted a man on the hotel porch, and Hank "held on" while Brisbane, hurriedly dismounting, arranged in a few words to have his horse

sent back to Badger's, to be thence taken on to Big Bear with the pack train. Then, shaking the dust from his clothes as best he could, he entered the coach with his precious saddle-bags, and sank back in the comfortable leather seat, noting with a sigh of relief that the only other passengers were a man of about his own age and a young girl. For the present, at least, he had avoided the sheriff's *posse*.

During the next ten minutes he lay back among the leather cushions, utterly exhausted, his eyes closed, his brain reviewing rapidly the astounding chain of events that had involved him in such an absurd yet dangerous predicament. As the coach drew up at his next stopping place, however, he sprang up and stared anxiously around him. Seeing nothing more alarming than the retreating figure of the other man, who had signaled for the coach to stop while he climbed up on the seat beside the driver, Brisbane sank back again. By this time, however, he had recovered sufficiently from his reckless ride to consider a plan of action. Plunging his hand into his saddle-bag, he took out the fatal bag of buckskin of which he had feloniously possessed himself. The bag was unsealed and fastened merely by a buckskin thong. Undoing the knot, with fingers that trembled in spite of himself, he peered in, hoping to find some clue to its owner's identity. At the first glance it appeared to contain only some ounces of gold dust and a few small nuggets. The next moment, however, he pulled out a small package wrapped in a piece of newspaper. Just as he was about to undo the wrappings, the coach lurched suddenly to one side, throwing Brisbane back violently, while something flashed from his hand to the floor, where it lay half way between the two seats. It was a gold locket, whose case, opened by the jar, revealed a girl's face. A charming face it was, Brisbane could see, as he made a motion as though to pick it up. As he did so he stopped short, his hand still outstretched, his eyes fastened on the countenace of the girl opposite. She, too, had made a motion as though to recover the locket, and now she, too, sat with her hand apparently frozen into its position. But it was not her attitude, nor yet her hand — small and daintily gloved — that attracted Brisbane's attention. It was the fact that her face was the same as that which looked out of the locket!

As Brisbane gazed into the questioning gray-blue eyes, and noticed the troubled curve of the small mouth, he felt that no sheriff's *posse* could have so distressed him as did this girl of eighteen. In a second it had flashed upon him that this was the locket broken from the chain of the elderly stranger the night before, and that the girl was some relative, probably his daughter.

Another movement of his other hand resulted in a similar movement on the part of his companion. It was like a parrying with invisible swords. Brisbane took a long breath and, reminding himself that, after all, the girl could know nothing of the real facts of the case, he suddenly swept the trinket towards him with his left foot, and snatching it from the floor, held it toward his companion with all the self-possession he could muster.

"This is yours, I believe?" he said a little thickly.

The girl accepted the trinket, turned it over, closed the spring, and then looked sharply back at Brisbane.

"Where — where did you find this?" she cried anxiously. "You found it, did you not?"

"Well — hardly that!" replied Brisbane, rather taken aback by this very natural inquiry. "You know the face?" he asked.

"As a matter of course. You, yourself, have recognized the likeness. I had it painted for papa, and gave it to him not a month ago. But if you did not exactly find it, as you say, how did you come by it? Did papa entrust it to you?"

"I doubt if he looked at it in just that light, you know," explained Brisbane, with growing embarrassment; "but yet, in a sense, he did entrust it to me."

"Oh, then you know papa! How delightful! When and where did you see him last?"

"I — I met — or rather I overtook him before daylight this morning, near a place called Badger's Bar. Our interview was very short," stammered Brisbane, and then feeling that he had floundered about quite enough in his efforts to lead up diplomatically to his disclosure, he took a bold plunge, and, as concisely as he could, gave an account of his adventures from the time of his receiving the gold dust. "And now as you already have the locket," he concluded, "let me lighten my conscience by surrendering the gold dust."

"I positively decline to receive it," replied the girl, laughing. "You must hand it to papa himself, when we reach Redding." And then, in answer to a look of surprise and inquiry, she explained that her father, Mr. Henry Weeks, of San Francisco, was to meet her on the arrival of the stage, and take her home by rail; that she had been visiting an uncle engaged in several large mining enterprises in the North, while her father had been for the first time up the river beyond Big Bear, to look over some until now unvisited hydraulic property in which he was interested.

When the stage at last reached Redding, Brisbane's companion stepped lightly from the coach, and running to her father, threw her arms about his neck, and kissed him again and again. "And to think, papa, dear, that you should actually have been waylaid and robbed! It was simply dreadful! But I have recovered your gold dust, papa, and captured the robber! Hand papa his property at once, if you please, sir!" she demanded, with a charming air of mock command.

As a mediator, Miss Weeks was necessarily a success. Explanations and apologies were soon made and smilingly accepted, and within an hour the three were seated in the cars together, and on their way to San Francisco.

Some six months afterwards, as Brisbane was about starting on his wedding journey, his father-in-law caused him no small embarrassment, by handing him a little buckskin sack of gold dust identical in weight and appearance with the one of which he had been relieved by Brisbane at Badger's Bar.

"I well know your taste for such trifles," he said, with a smile. "I should perhaps have added the miniature, but you won't care for that now that you have the original."

Little Miss Spuds.

BY WARD P. WINCHELL, U. S. N.

IT was during the war. The United States steamship *Kearsarge*, new then and unknown to fame, awaited the return of her captain. Steam was up, the anchor catted and fished, boats hoisted, guns secured for sea, and everything in readiness to leave Port-au-Prince forever, as every one hoped.

The morning was hot, moist, and stifling; heavy with odors of lush vegetation like the air of a greenhouse.

Mickey Murphy, landsman, with the Geneva cross of the sick list on his left arm, and a black eye, broken nose, and swelled mouth in explanation thereof, stood at the small port hole in the sick bay. Below him a negro woman sat in the bow of a bumboat, with a naked babe astride her hip. The warm rain dripped down the creases of its fat brown legs.

"Here, ye black haythen! Coover oop yer pickaninny," he called, after rummaging in his ditty box and finding a piece of black oil-cloth such as protects paymaster's flannel from the worm which dieth not. He pointed to the cloth and then to the baby to explain his words.

The woman lifted her face, brutish like that of a cowed dog, and a glad light came in her eyes, from which before had looked but the gloom and despair of her ancestors held in bondage. She spoke a few words in barbaric French to the man at the paddle.

With a stroke whose easy grace had cost many a sore muscle he sent the light craft directly under the port, and the oil-cloth dropped into the woman's outstretched hand.

She at once folded it up and carefully sat on it to keep it dry!

Mickey pointed vigorously at the naked babe and then at the gift, with, "Put it on the kid! put it on the kid!" and sundry other remarks as unprintable as they were forcible.

This vigor of language and pantomime was not without its effect. Soon a look of almost human intelligence beamed on her face. Rising and balancing skilfully in the boat, she handed the babe up to Mickey.

He took it in his great hard hands, fearful lest the soft, tender thing might fall apart, and lifting it carefully through the narrow port, he rolled it on a flannel shirt. Then he wiped off the raindrops, oil, and dirt that formed the babe's only covering.

The baby kicked up its heels, squirmed and wriggled, waved its arms and said, "Goo, goo," like any Christian child. Mickey smiled so expansively at its antics that he hurt his sore mouth. This made him conscious of his battered face, and he shrank instinctively from the baby eyes with the fathomless mystery of knowledge in their direct gaze. Heretofore he had been proud of these evidences of a good time ashore, but now he wanted to hide them.

"Shure, the tin commandments luks out av thim oyes o' yourn, Miss, but there's pity in 'em as well as blame. Bedad, it's a sharp tongue ye'll have wan av these days if it kapes oop wid yer oyes. Shure, now," as the baby wonderingly investigated the bruises with a hand like thistle down, "thot's a soft little hand to cure oop the hurts made by a hard wan."

Mickey put up his hand and the tiny fingers closed confidently around his thumb. Then the feeble, uncertain muscles tried to draw this new treasure up to an analytic mouth, failing which, the accommodating mouth moved down to meet the hand. The next moment the babe was sucking away contentedly at Murphy's thumb. He felt the pressure of two little teeth and the soft gum.

"Ye poor little kid! They ain't nothin' to ate there! Ye must git roight back to yer mammy," and with a feeling of tenderness to which he had long been a stranger, he went to call the boat. It was not there! He ran on deck; — yes, it was surely gone! There it was, half way ashore. The ship was moving, too! He ran below again.

"Of all the domn'd haythen tricks, thot's the most divilish. Well, Miss, ye belongs to me now fer betther or fer worse. Shure, Oi niver t'ought, whin Oi shipped in the navy, that Oi'd be a slave owner."

To conceal his prize until the ship got well out to sea, he made a soft nest in the drawer of the apothecary's writing desk, lowered her carefully into it, and closed the drawer, — all but a little crack through which he peeped in now and then. The child soon went to sleep, and with every stolen look Mickey's heart yearned toward her — which is according to nature. When the Lord clothes a soul in clay he mingles with the clay a certain soft need of loving. An old maid with her pampered pets is not ridiculous,— neither is a sailor cheated, by his unnatural life, of the joy of watching his little ones grow up around him. The store of love is there — whence we see wasted on dumb brutes the tender caresses meant to bless little children.

For Mickey the knowledge of that helpless bit of humanity in the desk made the hour of waiting for the apothecary's appearance one of almost paternal anxiety, and his heart executed a most extraordinary jump and tumble when the newcomer's facetious greeting was interrupted by a faint wail. "Must be some one's been playing a trick on the cat," said the dispenser of drugs, fumbling at first one drawer and then another. "Fine doings, shutting her up — " and then for a minute he sat as though stupefied at the small brown apparition that kicked up its heels, and waved its chubby arms, and screamed shrilly from the drawer of his desk. When finally he recovered voice and the use of his members it was to rush out on deck, uttering ejaculations that Mickey remarked were ill-mannered in the presence of a lady.

That the apothecary had gone straight to report to the captain the presence of this youthful stowaway, its foster father was certain; so he carefully picked up his neckerchief with the baby in it, knotted the four corners to make a sling, and proceeded with as good grace as was possible to meet his irate commander. With his hat off, bandaged face, red cross, and awkwardly carried sling from which peeped the baby, awed into temporary quiet by its strange surroundings, he made a picture not likely to conciliate his superior officer.

"What do you mean by stealing a helpless child and bringing it aboard ship to starve?" thundered the captain.

"Oi didn't, sorr," returned Mickey. "She was shoved on to me t'rough the air poort, and the unfalin' haythen wouldn't take

her back, sorr, though I begged on me binded knees. Whativer I'm to do to fade the kid, Oi dunno. It's a gal, an' they can't ate salt horse, loike boys."

While Murphy was busy with explanations which did not explain, the baby stared at the captain with democratic freedom, kicked her chubby feet about, sucked her thumb, reached out for the trumpet of the officer of the day, and in general comported herself in a fearless fashion befitting so adventurous a young woman.

As the upshot of the whole matter, Murphy got five days in the brig on reduced rations, which sentence was to be executed as soon as he came off the sick list. The baby, called Little Miss Spuds after her foster father,— Murphy and spuds are sailor synonyms for potatoes,— was to be turned over to the doctor's care, and many were the tales told in the wardroom, apropos of the doctor's amazed incredulity upon being called upon to attend to a newly arrived infant. On board a man-of-war the sudden and unheralded appearance of a baby seems naturally little short of miraculous.

Little Miss Spuds took very kindly to ship life. Since the medical stores did not include such an article as a nursing bottle, she was fed with a spoon; and great was the interest excited among the crew by the funny noises she made when eating, and her trick of occasionally blowing a spoonful in Mickey's face. He never fed her without an admiring and critical audience that showered all kinds of questions and advice on him.

"Say, Spuds," an interested bystander would ask, "arrowroot's good for babies, ain't it?"

"Yis, and so's a wit nurse," returns Mickey, "but the Navy Department don't supply ayther wan on riquisition."

"How old is she, Spuds?"

"She ain't ould at all, she's young."

"Well, how young, then?"

"Wan year," says Mickey.

"How do you know?"

"By her teeth, ye Gowk. Ye till a baby's age same as a harse's."

"But suppose she ain't got none?"

"Thin ye wait till they grow, and count back'ards."

"Lord, ain't she a kicker! Worse 'n a sopranny singer."

"She ought to be a sopranny singer, she's so much at home on the high 'Sea,'" punned one of the listeners.

"You ought to call her 'Flora McFlimsy,' cause she ain't got nothin' to wear."

Thus it went on, the little black baby being the cause of countless witticisms. Even in the wardroom the marine officer propounded the conundrum, "Why is she called Miss Spuds?"

And when it was given up, replied triumphantly, "Because Murphy is her 'Potative' father."

In a few days Mickey was sufficiently healed of his bruises to work off his sentence of five days in the brig. Miss Spuds went with him, not as *particeps criminis*, but merely because he begged so earnestly that no one else be given the care of her. So she shared his degradation and made his punishment seem naught, thus early and unconsciously fulfilling the law of her sex, which shares the disgrace of those they love and makes sorrow put on the face of joy.

Eventually the captain gave up all idea of sending her ashore. What was a nigger baby more or less, anyhow?

She soon had a wardrobe as extensive as any queen, but of a quality and cut that would have made a mother smile, had she not wept, to see Murphy subduing the giant strength of his clumsy fingers to the gentle task for which her deft touch was given to woman. Every man, whether he knew anything of the mystery of baby clothes or not, felt called upon to make her something. Wonderfully ingenious were some of the things she wore before the ship touched at Trinidad. There, not a liberty man came back, drunk or sober, who did not turn in some store baby clothes or toys.

Old John Anderson, captain of the hold, came reeling aboard with a bottle of rum which clumsily dropped out of his trouser-leg at the gangway and broke on the iron bunker plate. This was a court-martial offense; but in consideration of the fact that he held in his hand one wheel of a baby carriage, and tried to explain with his thick tongue how he had started with the whole thing, and the rest of it had disappeared during an argument he had with a policeman on the dock, he was let off with a warning.

Some practical joker ordered a thousand toothpicks, which came aboard the next day duly addressed, "Miss Spuds."

She slept in a dainty little silk cot swung like a hammock and woven by hand. It had high sides so she couldn't fall out, for she was beginning to climb around recklessly.

Her hammock number was a zero, elaborately gilded by the ship's painter, and though she drew no ration, she was an honored guest in everybody's mess.

She was beginning to talk, too, and one of her first speeches was a choice bit of sailor profanity. Mickey's guardian angel must have smiled to hear the serious talk he gave Miss Spuds on this occasion. After that there was no more swearing in her presence by anybody. Mickey's "Oi ain't goin' to have her learn nothin' like thot" was enough.

When she began to creep around the deck, the carpenter built a small portable fence that could be secured in a safe place, and she was put in the enclosure to play with her toys.

She soon made friends with the parrots, macaws, and ship's cat, and could carelessly seize them by any convenient projecting limb without danger.

She was rather slow about learning to walk, possibly on account of the rolling of the ship, so it was a proud day for all her friends when she took her first step. She gayly fell into one pair of the many hands outstretched to receive her after this great feat and laughed out, "Mickey, Spuds can do."

As she grew more confident, her little feet went pattering around all day, and she picked up words with marvelous ease. Soon they invented a sort of mental hide-and-seek game for her. Drawing her into his lap some sailor would say, "Now I am hiding, see if you can find me." Then she would begin questioning him, looking into his face with her big brown eyes.

"Are you behind the galley?"

He would gravely reply, "No."

"Down in the hold?"

"No."

"In the fire-room?"

"No."

"In the wardroom?"

"No, indeed."

And so she would name all the parts of the ship that she knew, until he finally said "yes," and then she would laugh merrily and clap her hands, and ask him to "do it again."

One evening she leaned against Murphy's knee as he smoked his pipe. She pursed up her little mouth and began blowing up into the darkness.

"Whot are ye tryin' ter do, Miss?" he asked respectfully.

"Tryin' to make the stars shine brighter," she answered.

"Be aisy, or ye'll blow 'em all out," he replied, with a happy smile. Unwittingly to him and to her, Miss Spuds was daily making the stars that shone on him brighten their shining. Mickey was a good-conduct man now. For good or evil in the human heart is a hidden slow growth, not a sudden upheaval; the result of gentle, long-continued tendency rather than a volcanic rending of old habits and rebuilding of new. It is not to be measured but as one measures the slow moving of a glacier.

It was in June, 1864. The *Kearsarge* lay at Flushing, when important news was brought aboard, and a few hours later she steamed over to Cherbourg. There the *Alabama* swung peacefully at anchor, the first ship to teach the nations of the earth the value of commerce destroying reduced to a science.

What followed every one knows. On a beautiful Sunday morning, June 19, for something over an hour the two ships circled around each other, busy punctuating the page of history with heavy periods. The *Alabama* put a fitting end to her career by joining her many victims at the bottom of the sea.

During the fight Miss Spuds occupied a cozy little hammock, which was swung away aft in the shaft alley, far beneath the water line. She was securely lashed in so she couldn't get out, and given a big armful of toys to beguile the time, but she didn't need them, for she was interested in her strange surroundings.

Under her turned the big shaft, so fascinatingly mysterious that she strained her neck and eyes watching it. And the bell signals were jangling out beyond there in the engine room, and the big guns booming so up on deck. It was great fun, and she laughed and talked to herself, and evidently thought that the whole thing was got up for her sole amusement by her sailor friends.

When the oiler came around to look at the thrust bearing beneath her, she laughed aloud, for she knew he would tell her other friends, and she wanted them to know she was enjoying the new game.

He patted her head kindly as he started forward again, and just then there was a louder and funnier noise than all the others. It nearly upset her hammock, and was such fun she hoped it would be repeated. She wanted to *encore* it, but she didn't know how.

She never knew that this noise was caused by a hundred-pound shell from the Blakely rifle of the *Alabama*, which struck the stern post of the *Kearsarge*, about ten feet from Miss Spuds, and, failing to explode, harmlessly buried itself in the wood. The section of the stern post containing the shell was afterwards cut out and exhibited as a relic at Washington, where it can be seen to this day.

When the oiler reappeared, she said, "Make it go BOOM again," to show him how pleased she was with this crowning effort of her friends.

He told of it afterwards, and the superstitious friends of Miss Spuds said she had saved the ship. It was plain to them that, had she not been there, the shell would have exploded and disabled both the rudder and propeller; and every man on board from the cook to the commander contemplated with pride the honors she, as one of the survivors of the victory, would share with them.

But it was not to be. She fell sick soon after the homeward-bound pennant flung its long length to the breeze, and the tiny spark of life flickered and went out in spite of medical skill and careful nursing.

No more pathetic sight was ever seen than when her tender body, sewed up in such a pitiful little bit of canvas, went sliding off a grating into the sea, while officers and crew stood around with bared heads. The sound of that splash as the salt waves closed forever over her was never forgotten by one man on board. He never knew any other love, and so now, thirty years after the sea took her body, she still lives in his memory as a prattling, mischievous, baby girl, blessed with the eternal youth that death alone can give.

A Model Revolution.

BY W. MACPHERSON WILTBANK AND SEWELL FORD.

H, you're just in time for the revolution!"

This was the whispered greeting Don Munios gave me half an hour after my arrival in La Guayro.

"Revolution," said I, "what revolution?"

"S-s-h!" said he. Then leading the way into the library, he carefully closed the door and answered with a chuckle, "Why, *yours*, of course."

"My revolution! Look here, Munios, out with your joke."

"But it's no joke. We've got the men, we've got the guns, and the trap is all but ready to be sprung. A week from St. Sebastian's and the business will be on. It won't take long. We bag the Prince, that rascal Castillio, his councilor, and General Sarjos at one clip. At the next we get the Prince's brother and one or two of the smaller fry in the army. Then, *vive la republique!*"

"And what is to happen to these people you mention?"

"Oh, just removed — g-r-r-, you know," and Don Munios drew his hand across his throat with a suggestive leer. Yet I have seen his eyes fill with tears at sight of a pin scratch on a child's arm.

In an instant my business instinct was up in arms. "Look here!" I said hotly, "you don't suppose that I take stock in your g-r-r business, do you? Why, that sort of thing would simply kill my enterprise. As a friend, I advise you to drop your revolution right here."

"What!" Don Munios threw his cigarette out of the window and jumped to his feet. "Let Guayro suffer longer under this good-for-nothing Prince? Why, see what he's done for the country in the last five years! Look at the banana plantations — abandoned! Look at the gold mines — idle! Look at the railroad — two streaks of rust and a mortgage! Look at the quays!

They rot in the sun. The treasury is bankrupt, the government corrupt, and things are going to the dogs generally, all that our featherhead of a Prince may amuse himself with his boon companions and make a study of new sensations!"

Calm or ruffled, these people of Spanish blood are always picturesque. Their fires of passion are ever lightly banked. Just open a damper and the flames leap from coals which a moment before seemed black and dead. And Don Munios was a true Spaniard.

"Your Prince may be all you say," I returned, "and your affairs may have gone to the dogs, but mine are all right, and a revolution would play ducks and drakes with them. Why not use peaceable means, — agree to get along without a Prince, and send him back to Spain marked 'unavailable'?"

"Impossible! I'd be as much opposed to bloodshed as you are, but I know the situation. The officers are well paid and well treated. They are the Prince's boon companions. As for the soldiers, they idolize their officers, — and there you are! No, the people have made up their minds that for the good of La Guayro the Prince and his soldier friends must die. In confidence I tell you that in ten days the blow will fall. If in that time you can propose any plan for setting up a republic peacefully, I promise to put it fairly before the Revolutionary Council."

This was the situation over which we argued until the stars faded; and it still "hung heavy over my head" when I awoke to find the tropic sun beating straight down upon the adobe walls of my host's home.

Not that I am an ardent humanitarian,— though naturally not in favor of wholesale bloodletting. But as I had intimated to Don Munios, there were pressing personal and financial reasons why I could not tamely consent to a revolution at La Guayro.

And this brings me to tell how I happened to be in that tropical country. Way back in the Paleozoic age a few million years ago,— to go to the root of things, — a minute marine insect flourished most prolifically in the waters that covered that part of the globe. The cast-off shells of countless generations of these insects formed a bank many feet thick on the bottom of the sea, and when, in a subsequent age, the ocean had become dry land, this bank

was gradually buried. Then, ages later, a prying and learned chap by the name of Pratt, Junius K., came along and discovered the deposit, and, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, lugged off a bag of the stuff, and experimented until he found it was something for which certain manufacturers would pay an almost fabulous price. Corolith, I'll call it, though that isn't the real name.

Having in addition to his special knowledge enough general wisdom to appreciate the unfitness of a scientist for launching a business enterprise, he gave me a share of his secret in return for my services as a promoter.

Since then everything had gone swimmingly, and now, only a year after the agreement, I had come to La Guayro as representative of the Corolith Company, Limited, with several millions of capital, and a concession from the government of La Guayro given in return for a sum in tax that assured royal reception in the bankrupt kingdom.

To make our position doubly secure I had, in a sort of inspection tour three months ago, engaged Don Munios as local agent with a salary that had secured his protestations of everlasting loyalty. Indeed, even now he tried to make himself believe that the prospective revolution was for the company's best good, though to me it was evident that, like all Latin America, he loved war for war's sake. And war to me meant nothing less than indefinite delay in digging corolith, if indeed the mere rumor of it did not knock the bottom out of our stocks in the New York market.

At any rate, gunpowder costs money, and whoever won would make us pay their bills in the shape of taxes.

Viewed from any angle, the situation accumulated seriousness at such a rate that before I had been up an hour I had cabled to the New York office that a revolution impended, and that unless it could be prevented our interests would be imperiled. With as much urgency as I could put into a cable message, I begged that the president of the company should come at once.

When I reported my movement to Don Munios, asked his hospitality for the expected guest, and suggested that an unknown capitalist from New York might throttle the dogs of war in La Guayro, his face expressed incredulity. However, he was sufficiently politic to say only that the *Americano* could *not* possibly

get here in time; "for," he explained, "there's not another steamer leaving New York for La Guayro before the fifteenth."

When I suggested that the *Americano* could charter a steamer, Don Munios's face expressed such amazement at the suggested opulence as mine must have shown when I was confronted with his grown-up-in-a-night revolution. In La Guayro life is cheap and money dear.

For two days I fairly lived at the cable office, waiting feverishly for an answer; but the oracle remained dumb, while the hours alternately galloped and stood still.

On the third morning I had gone down to the steamship office — to lay my plans in case it seemed necessary to get away before the row began — and on one pretext and another killed an hour or two there. Finally the sight of a knot of people gathering on the quay drew me thither to join them in watching a big white yacht plow her way up the bay. She did not deign to poke her aristocratic nose up to the tumble-down quay, but came to a stop off shore, not even dropping her anchor. It was much such a craft, but arrived at least three days before even a miracle of speed could have brought it, as I could imagine the Corolith Company might have sent to the rescue of its fortunes; and it was with a sense of injury that I watched the immaculate duck-clad sailors swing the gig from the midship davits and drop the companion-way to the starboard. Then injury changed to mystification as a curiously familiar figure, followed by a man carrying a dress suit case, sauntered out of the cabin, shook hands with half a dozen men aboard, waved an airy good-by, stepped into the boat, turning to me a face that — yes, there was no mistaking him, — it was the face of Lewis Rayner, the president of our company, and the one man in the world who, if the means existed for accomplishing a bloodless revolution in La Guayro, would find these means.

Rayner I had seen develop from a schoolboy, with a corner on marbles, to a capitalist with credit in a dozen banks and the finest collection of rare books this side of the Atlantic. In a year I have known him to bring out a new type-setting machine, promote a Western mining syndicate, catalogue his library, and learn Spanish as an incidental aid to furthering railroad interests in

Mexico,—all with equal success,—and never yet had I plumbed the depths of his resources or found him unequal to any emergency. Without burdening himself with things or facts, he knew beyond any one I have met, the secret of legitimately acquiring other people's best thoughts and things, and how to put them to uses undreamed of by their original owners. So when he stepped off the quay at La Guayro, exactly three days ahead of my closest calculations, I only babbled my delight that he had arrived so soon after receiving my message.

"Message," repeated Rayner, as I helped his man tumble their belongings into the broken-down vehicle that did duty for a public conveyance. "I got no message. Left New York eight days ago with Sam Hiller and his crew. He came clear from the Keys to drop me off here, and now he's going back after alligators. But what about your message? Nothing wrong with Corolith, I hope, for I'm down here for a month's rest. Doctor's orders. Told me to hunt up the dullest, sleepiest hole on earth and go there. Well, what are you snickering about?"

As well as I could, the way in which we were being jolted over vilely paved streets, and also considering the proximity of Rayner's man on the front seat, I explained the La Guayro tangle, winding up with the point blank question whether he could straighten it out. To which Rayner responded only with the counter question, when could he see Don Munios? When informed that we were to be guests at that worthy's he relapsed into silence. Rayner did not keep the workings of his mind in a glass case.

The surprise of Don Munios on seeing my companion had a touch of fear in it. The Latin American is only a generation removed from the believer in the black arts.

"Your Yankee steamships must have the wings of the wind," was all he said. And neither Rayner nor I denied it.

After dinner, seated under the palm trees in the courtyard, Don Munios gave a report of the preparations for revolution, which he vainly attempted not to make enthusiastic; ending his account, as I had mine, by asking if Rayner had any peaceable plan to suggest.

"Give me time," said my friend slowly. "You don't suppose I have conspiracies on tap, do you? Besides, there are one or two things I want to know."

Then ensued something like a game of twenty questions, in which Rayner in an hour acquired more information concerning La Guayro, its finances, agriculture, banking system, etiquette, leading men, and in especial concerning the character, foibles, and habits of its ruler, than I had obtained during the two months of my previous stay.

Finally, "So the Prince amuses himself, he seeks new sensations at the expense of his people," he said slowly. "And the people — they are ready for a republic?"

"As the rosebud is ready to burst into bloom," said the Spaniard fervently.

"Um. With the Prince out of the way, would you have any trouble in establishing it?"

"Not a bit," said the Spaniard, only he put it again in the form of a flowery figure of speech.

"And you say there's no successor?"

Don Munios repeated that there was no heir apparent, that the Prince was a bachelor, and his only brother mentally unsound. "Besides," he added, "it's generally understood that the principality is to end with him and a popular form of government is to be adopted."

"That simplifies matters. Now let me have a chance to think things over."

Rayner's way of thinking things over was characteristic. It seemed to consist in literally seeing the town from its markets and quays, to the cathedral and palaces, and in casually chatting with representatives of every class, from the mule drivers to the chief conspirators, and the Prince himself. It even allowed him to spend an hour or so each evening in Munios's library, never reading, but apparently reveling in the atmosphere of books.

On the evening of the third day Rayner and I sat and smoked silently in this library. Apparently he was idly gazing at the ceiling. Then he walked about the room, glancing at the rows of books that lined the walls. He looked with the critical eye of a book fancier at the backs of one or two, and finally sat down with a volume on his knee.

"I've got it," he said quietly after a time, closing the volume and blowing a ring of smoke towards the ceiling.

"Got it! I knew you would. What is it?"

"That's it — up there," pointing to the thinning smoke ring.

"But where did you get it?"

"Out of that book. That's where the best of us go for an idea. Men have been thinking for ages, and writing what they thought for centuries. Don't try to do all your thinking yourself. Use other men's brains when you can. It pays."

"Which book? Let me see." But he had put the volume back, and would only indicate his source of inspiration by an indefinite wave of the hand. He said nothing more until Don Munios returned late that night from a meeting of the conspirators.

"The Prince suspects nothing as yet?" asked Rayner of the arch conspirator.

"I shouldn't be at liberty if he did."

"Good! Now I have a little plan. If it works, you can organize your republic without decimating the population. If it don't, you will be free to use your rifles and banana knives. Can I depend on you, Don Munios?"

"To the last."

"All right. Now I want you to tell me about this banquet we're all invited to at the Palace a — let's see, three days from now."

The banquet was the usual monthly affair to which not only Don Munios, but Rayner and I, as large taxpayers worthy of conciliation, had already been invited.

Don Munios repeated this information, with appropriate phrases concerning wines and sweets wrung from the starving people.

"Yes, I know," said Rayner; "but I want details. Where is it to be held?"

"In the big banqueting hall of the Palace."

"Oh, yes. It was being redecorated when I went over it, so I didn't see it. Quite a fine place, isn't it? Is it lighted by electricity?"

"Yes — " more phrases concerning the Prince's criminal extravagance.

"One thing more. Who is the Prince's royal sky-pilot, father confessor, chief priest, or that sort of thing?"

The Spaniard's eyes expressed mental dizziness at this irreverence.

"The Archbishop of La Guayro. But why — "

"All right; I'd like to meet him to-morrow. Can you fix it?"

"Certainly, only — "

"One thing more. You say the Prince likes to be amused. Do you suppose that you could arrange to have him ask my man Drake to be present as entertainer? Oh, Drake's no clothes-brusher," — to a look in the Spaniard's eyes. "He's a gentleman, Drake is, college graduate, and all that; but something went wrong with him early in life — crossed in love, maybe — and he's never got a grip on life. Been fancy drink mixer in a Broadway café, advance agent for a two-ring circus, faro dealer in a Colorado mining camp, and has graced half a dozen other professions. He's been a bookmaker at country race tracks, turned street fakir when times were dull, and has done a turn as magician on the variety stage. My friends and I found him mighty entertaining on the yacht, I assure you, and quite fit for gentlemen to associate with. And I think I may assure you he'll give the Prince a new sensation or two. Now why not introduce him as the distinguished French prestidigitateur, Monsieur Brion? Will that go?"

"Certainly," said Don Munios, catching some of his infectious enthusiasm. "The Prince will insist on summoning him if he numbers the black art among his accomplishments. Our sovereign dotes on that sort of thing. Only I don't understand — "

"Oh, I thought we might give him one night's fun before he quits the Prince business," said Rayner, yawning. "Suppose we get some sleep, gentlemen, I'm tired."

And neither that night nor on the three days following would Rayner utter a word to either of us concerning his plan. In fact he seemed to have forgotten it himself, and spent most of his time strolling around the city, chatting of old missals and cathedrals with the Bishop introduced to him by Munios, discussing military matters with the generals, talking affairs electric with the Palace electrician,— a clever young American who was winning his spurs in the service of the Prince.

Drake, meantime, had received his invitation, and was making such preparations as were possible without apparatus.

When Don Munios, becoming uneasy as the next day of grace approached, remonstrated and reminded him that the Revolutionary Committee was going ahead with its preparations, Rayner nodded his acquiescence. "All right," he said; "load your guns, sharpen your swords and organize your government. I suppose you'll have a dictator for awhile. All I want is the assurance that your first cabinet will sign an iron-bound contract to respect our concession, and let us dig corolith twelve months in the year."

"I'll answer for that," said Don Munios. "But when are you going to get the Prince out of the way?"

"Wait till after the banquet," was the enigmatic reply.

It was a superb affair even for the Prince of La Guayro — that banquet — for the fact that it marked the thirty-third birthday of the sovereign gave an excuse for extra preparation. As large taxpayers and persons to be conciliated, Rayner and I were given seats of honor, Rayner on the Prince's right hand, and I next to my friend. On either side of the long table gleaming with the royal palace plate and glass and flowers extended a line of dark, heavily moustached men, many handsome, most of them young, and looking very brave and gay in their broadcloth, brass buttons, and gold lace. The viands were of distinguished excellence, and the wine of a flavor that belongs only to the output of certain world-renowned vineyards. At the same time there was no vulgar excess. It was not for nothing that the Prince had made the pursuit of pleasure the chief business of his life.

By the time the last course was reached, all things had worked together to bring the company into just the humor for greeting with fervent enthusiasm the gentleman introduced as "M. Brion, the far-famed magician, and friend of President Rayner of the Corolith Company."

And M. Brion, otherwise Drake, proved himself worthy of Rayner's praises. Without any outfit but playing cards, rings, coins, handkerchiefs, and other small objects borrowed on the spot, he kept the entire assembly mystified and entranced. The Prince he captured at the start, by making a strawberry grow out of that gentleman's salt-cellar. Don Munios for the moment forgot the revolution in wonder of beholding a mango seed, hidden in his

table napkin, sprout, leave out, and finally shoot up into a perfect plant.

Finally after a number of tricks involving the disappearance of coins, interchange of rings, and the like, Drake took up a pack of playing cards, and proceeded to such card throwing as I have never seen.

Standing at the foot of the long table, he dealt a card to each of the thirty guests without moving from his position, landing the pasteboard deftly in the finger glass before each man. Then he threw one which sailed gracefully to a point just above the Prince's head, and then returned to the hand of the magician. The native boomerang thrower of Australia would have been moved to envy to see the Queen of Hearts float back with such precision to the hand that sent her. Besides, he read cards through the back, made a rainbow of them about his head, and performed half a dozen clever tricks that took by storm the La Guayreans.

Suddenly, as if by way of climax, he turned, gave a long, shrill whistle, and, with a graceful gesture, sent the entire pack fluttering like a flock of birds straight at the walls of the banquet hall. Before the first one fell to the floor the lights went out with a snap, and the company was left in total darkness.

For a moment there was absolute silence, then the faint clink of metal betrayed the fact that there was a furtive reaching for swords. The Spaniard trusts no man in the dark.

The next instant, however, all were reassured, and ardent Spanish interjections broke from the lips of the Prince and his delighted guests. Where had been the solid wall of the palace now appeared a fairy-like landscape. Trees, mountains, a lake, a river and waterfall gleamed out of the darkness as by enchantment, then faded as quickly as they had appeared. But with only an instant's interval the scene appeared again, this time faintly as a landscape seen in the gray of early morning. Then one of the upper clouds was streaked with pink; then another. The light grew stronger, the whole sky and scene were gradually lighted up, until we saw it once more as if in the glare of the noonday sun.

Darkness again, illuminated this time by the crimson glow of a sunset. Then another interval of blackness and the electric globes

in the crystal chandelier above us blazed out again, and instead of gazing at the magic landscape, our eyes detected that what had seemed a section of the solid wall of the Palace was a sort of drop curtain painted to match the other decorations. These waterfalls, dawns, and noons, and sunsets had not been the product of black art, but merely the work of a clever scene painter and skilful electrician.

As the storm of applause following M. Brion's withdrawal died away, the Prince rose, glass held high.

"A health to M. Brion and Signor Rayner," he cried, his handsome face aglow.

With a bell-like tinkling of glasses the toast was drunk, and we had pushed back our chairs and begun to move about and break up into groups, when the voice of Castillio, the chief councilor of the Prince, drew all eyes to our end of the table.

"The Prince! Look!"

Without a sound His Highness had sunk back into his chair, his arms limp, his head hanging to one side, his face, lately gay and glowing, now turned an ashy gray.

The next moment he fell into the arms of General Sarjos, who sat at the Prince's left.

In an instant a contagion of excitement spread to the entire Palace. While attendants removed the Prince to his apartments a messenger was despatched for the Royal Physician and the Archbishop, and the banqueters, now thoroughly sobered, withdrew to the reception room to await developments.

"A slight heart seizure, or a mild stroke of apoplexy," was the news with which we were finally dismissed. And it was added that the Royal Physician expected that the Prince would soon revive. But those acquainted with the ways of Palaces wagged their heads knowingly over the non-committal nature of the report.

By 9 the next morning the seriousness of the Prince's condition could no longer be concealed, but was proclaimed in bulletins to the excited crowd who had been waiting at the Palace gates since dawn. At noon the Prince was still unconscious, and the bulletins indicated grave doubts of his recovery. At 2 P. M. the situation was the same. His respiration was faint and the heart action almost imperceptible.

At 3 o'clock it was rumored that the Archbishop, who stood ready to administer extreme unction, had proposed that as a last expedient he should resort to an old custom still prevalent among Spanish-speaking people. In accordance with this usage, when a man of prominence is supposed to be dying, has apparently but one chance in a hundred of living, and wants to make the most of it, he has his head shaved, is dressed in a monk's robes, and takes a solemn vow, if his life is spared, to enter a monastery.

Then, if he dies, his soul is saved from perdition, and if he lives the monastery receives a notable recruit. For there's no renouncing of his vows; it's not a case of "when the devil is sick the devil a monk would be, and when the devil is well the devil a monk is he."

If he is unconscious, — and herein lay the special application of the custom, — his friends may take the necessary steps without his sanction.

In short, the priests asked that in order to save the Prince's life for this world, or his soul for the next, they should make a monk of him; and though Castillio and the army officers protested vigorously, many prominent and pious citizens, some of whom Don Munios had been accustomed to meet with in secret, enthusiastically seconded the appeal of the monks. As for the ignorant and superstitious common people, who believed fervently in the potency of the old custom, they thronged about the cathedral and raised their voices in a fervor of entreaty.

At 4 it was officially announced that the Archbishop would wait until 6 o'clock, and that if by that time the Prince was still unconscious and alive, he would perform the ceremony.

When 6 arrived and the Prince's condition was unchanged, word swept through the dense crowd that filled the plazas, and, overflowing, pressed against the very gates of the Palace, that the operation of transforming the Prince into a monk had begun.

And indeed, up in the royal chamber hung with silks, lighted with rosy chandeliers, gilded, and perfumed, and flower filled, the ceremony was carried through to the end. The royal love locks were shaved, the royal form, accustomed to the softest linen and cloth, was arrayed in the plain shirt and coarse serge; in place

of flashing studs or cunningly enameled chains, a wooden rosary was hung around the royal neck.

Then, comforted by the thought that the soul of the Prince was saved from perdition, the royal household waited for the end.

But the expected end was not to come. About 7 o'clock the Prince showed signs of returning vitality. In another hour he opened his eyes, and by 9 o'clock he was sitting up, rubbing his hands over his head in bewilderment, and weakly gasping a "health to M. Brion and Signor Rayner."

Meantime Don Munios and his followers, realizing the drift of affairs, had quietly gathered their forces, seized the Arsenal, and before Castillio and the Prince's military friends understood what was happening, occupied the royal council chamber, — all without a struggle.

Just at midnight, as the Prince, by order of the Archbishop, was carried off to the monastery, uttering remonstrances grievously out of character with his habit, Don Munios and his friends proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of La Guayro. The thing had been done without the pop of a gun or the loss of a single life.

"Lewis," said I, as we sat in Munios's library late that night, "now that Providence intervened so opportunely, do you mind telling me your plan?"

"Providence!" returned my friend scornfully. "I couldn't wait for Providence. The Prince was in too good health. So I had it fixed up with Drake that while the lights were out I should drop the potion into the Prince's cup."

"But the custom?"

"I discovered it that night in the library — recorded in Volume III., Chapter 4, of that set of Curiosities of Spanish History. In chumming with the Archbishop I found that it was still 'practical.' But say," said Lewis with a twinkle of appreciation, "do you suppose that the Prince, in all his varied experience, ever had a sensation that matched his when he found he'd been made into a monk?"